

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5325
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

S E C R E T SANA 3405

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, YS
SUBJ: SITUATION IN SOUTH YEMEN

SUMMARY: SUCCESSORS TO SALIM RUBAYI ALI ARE FINDING IT TOUGH
GOING IN SOUTH YEMEN BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE JUST HOW
MUCH DISSIDENCE EXISTS IN PDRY. END SUMMARY.

1. REPORTING ON SOUTH YEMEN FROM SANA SHOULD BE EASIER
THAN EVER BEFORE BECAUSE OF LARGE NUMBER OF MILITARY OFFICERS
AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO ARE FLEEING PDRY ON WAKE OF
ASSASSINATION OF SALIM RUBAYI ALI. THE YEMENIS AND SAUDIS
HAVE CRANKED UP SPECIAL EFFORTS TO EXPLOIT THESE RESOURCES
AND IN NEXT FEW WEEKS WE MAY GET A BETTER PICTURE OF THE MILITARY
AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE SOUTH. PART OF THE

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REASON FOR THIS IS THAT, WITH THE DISENCHANTMENT OF
THE TRIBES AND MILITARY ACROSS THE SOUTHERN BORDER, IT
IS POSSIBLE FOR PEOPLE TO GO INTO THE COUNTRY AS WELL
AS GO OUT AND MOVE ABOUT AND TALK WITH OTHER PEOPLE MORE
THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE LAST DECADE.

2. UNFORTUNATELY, OUR HARVEST OF INTELLIGENCE SO FAR HAS

BEEN SLIM. THE YEMENIS ARE BUSY WITH EXPLOITATION BUT BOTH THEIR EFFORTS AND THAT OF THE SAUDIS LEAVE MUCH TO BE DESIRED ON A PROFESSIONAL BASIS AND WE STILL CANNOT PUT TOGETHER A GOOD SCENARIO OF WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LAST TWO DAYS OF SALIM'S LIFE AND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN SOUTH YEMEN NOW. INSTEAD, WE HAVE BITS AND PIECES WHICH WE CAN'T EASILY CORROBORATE OR PUT TOGETHER IN CLEAR PICTURE.

3. IT IS, NEVERTHELESS, WORTH REPORTING THAT THE HIGHEST OFFICIALS IN THE YEMENI SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY ORGANS BELIEVE THAT THE SOUTH YEMENI GOVERNMENT HAS VIRTUALLY LOST CONTROL OF THE HINTERLANDS, EXCEPT WHERE FOREIGN TROOPS CAN BE EMPLOYED. FOR INSTANCE, THE GARRISON ON PERIM ISLAND SEEMS TO BE ENTIRELY FOREIGN NOW AFTER TROOPS LOYAL TO SALIM WERE SAVAGELY PUT DOWN BY PLANES AND GROUND UNITS AT THE DISPOSAL OF ABD AL-FATTAH ISMAIL. IT APPEARS TO YEMENIS HERE THAT MUKAYRIS IS BEING HELD BY ETHIOPIAN UNITS FOREIGN FORCES ARE STRETCHED THIN, HOWEVER, AND LARGE SECTIONS OF THE 2ND, 3RD AND 4TH GOVERNORATES HAVE SEEN THE EVACUATION OR DEFECTION OF MOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND TROOPS. THE YEMENI OFFICIALS HERE ALSO BELIEVE THAT TRIBAL SHAYKHS FROM THE MOUNTAINOUS BORDER REGIONS ARE BARRING RE-ENTRY OF PDRY GOVERNMENT FORCES INTO THE AREA AND THAT THE PROSPECT FOR EXPANDED NUMBERS OF AMBUSHES OF GOVERNMENT FORCES IS VERY GOOD.

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4. BY CONTRAST, YEMENI OFFICIALS DO NOT SEEM TO EXPECT URBAN TERRORISM ON ANY LARGE SCALE TO OCCUR IN ADEN WHICH THEY REPORT NOT ONLY QUIET BUT COMPLETELY UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL.

5. YEMENI SOURCES HERE PUT THE NUMBER OF CUBANS IN SOUTH YEMEN AT OVER 6 THOUSAND AND CLAIM THAT ETHIOPIAN TROOPS AS WELL AS SOVIET TROOPS HAVE BEEN FLOWN INTO ADEN. THEY BELIEVE SOVIET NAVAL UNITS ARE ACTIVE IN COASTAL PATROLLING AND TOOK PART IN THE SHELLING OF PERIM GARRISON AS WELL AS THE REPUBLICAN PALACE.

6. COMMENT: THE UBIQUITY OF THESE STORIES COMPEL OUR BELIEF, DESPITE THE ABSENCE OF HARD INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION LIKE FIRST-HAND SIGHTING, RADIO INTERCEPTION, DOCUMENTS, ETC. WHILE THE GRAPEVINE IN SAUDI ARABIA CANNOT BE TRUSTED FOR FIGURES, IT USUALLY REPORTS ACCURATELY ON MAJOR EVENTS AND WE CONSIDER THE ROLE OF FOREIGN TROOPS IN THE DEFEAT OF SALIM RUBAYI ALI AND CONSOLIDATION OF ABD AL FATTAH TO BE CONFIRMED. WE ALSO CONCLUDE THAT THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN PDRY WILL TAKE A LONG TIME AND BE WIDELY IF NOT SUCCESSFULLY OPPOSED. THE

QUESTION OF WHAT KIND OF DISSIDENCE MIGHT OCCUR IS HARD TO ANSWER. WE DO NOT KNOW AT THE MOMENT HOW TO INTERPRET THE SLOW-DOWN AND SMALL NUMBER OF TROOPS DEFECTING FROM THE SOUTH TO THE NORTH. IT COULD INDICATE THE ARMY HAS CAPITULATED TO A FAIT ACCOMPLI AND TO THE FEARS (AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION) ENTAILED BY THE PURGES GOING ON. THE SLOW-DOWN COULD MEAN A BROADER SENSE OF DISSIDENCE IS BEING HATCHED, BUT THIS SEEMS LESS LIKELY TO US.
RANSOM

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